

THE STATE OF LOUISIANA

Strives to Prevent/End Chronic Homelessness

VISION: TOGETHER, LOUISIANA WILL END CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS.

Introduction: Ending chronic homelessness can only occur through a collaborative effort of the Governor, the Legislature, state agencies, local government, federal government, the nonprofit sector, the business sector, and homeless persons.

Chronic Homelessness is defined as:

The 2003 Joint Notice of Funding Availability by the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, and the Departments of Housing and Urban Development, Health and Human Services and Veterans Affairs, identified a definition of chronic homelessness.

The Joint Federal initiative defined a chronically homeless person as “**an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more OR has had at least (4) episodes of homelessness in the past three (3) years.**”

PRIORITY	STRATEGY	ACTION STEPS	EXPECTED OUTCOMES	COORDINATOR	STATUS	Completion Date (Estimated)
1. EXPAND AND MAXIMIZE HOUSING RESOURCES FOR CHRONICALLY HOMELESS PEOPLE.	1.a. Research best practices locally, statewide and nationally for adaptation and implementation in Louisiana.	1.a.1. Identify national “best practices” models for housing programs for implementation in Louisiana.	National evidence-based practices in models of housing the chronically homeless will be identified and studied. Effective models in Louisiana will be identified.	Martha Kegel	Housing First model (scattered site rental assistance with intensive case management) pioneered by NY’s Pathways to Housing, has 85% success rate in moving mentally ill people off street and keeping them housed at least 5 years. Other successful models are Safe Havens (low-barrier congregate housing) and Supportive Housing apt. buildings with supportive services such as Rebuilding Lives program in Columbus.	June 2005
		1.a.2. Compile and disseminate information on best practices.	Identify partners who need to be informed. Develop packet and disseminate. Meet with key partners.	Martha Kegel, John Bellew and Carolyn Breaux	UNITY hosted meeting of Metro Human Serv Dist with Sam Tsemberis in Dec. 2004. Martha Kegel discussed model with OMH consultant.	June 2005
		1.a.3. Secure technical assistance to facilitate implementation.	Request TA from Policy Academy and from Louisiana HUD office as needed.	Martha Kegel, Janice Roberts	Conference call scheduled for March 1, 2005.	Ongoing
	1.b. Expand availability of housing affordable to this target population.	1.b.1. Advocate for a dedicated funding mechanism for the Louisiana Housing Trust Fund to generate significant funds to develop affordable housing, and ensure that some portion of the Trust Fund is used to house homeless and chronically homeless persons.	1. Governor proposes dedicated funding mechanism, supported by Louisiana Advocacy Coalition for the Homeless (LACH) and adopted by Legislature. 3. Louisiana Housing Finance Agency targets a portion of Trust Fund for housing homeless persons and families.	James Gilmore, LHFA, LACH	James Gilmore and LACH are investigating funding mechanisms. New Orleans Housing Coalition is hosting a session March 10 with a national expert on trust funds to explore various funding models.	Sept. 2006
		1.b.2. Determine how homeless persons can get their fair share of HOME and Housing Tax Credit dollars through set-asides or incentives. Seek use of HOME funds for rental assistance.	1.Set-asides or incentives are created for Tax Credit and HOME programs. 2.Consolidated Plan authorizes use of HOME funds for rental assistance.	LHFA, Debra Washington, Bonnie Moore, Martha Kegel	LHFA exploring incentives for tax credit program. Bonnie Moore and Martha Kegel submitted comments for Consolidated Plan. Martha forwarded information to LHFA re Connecticut’s set-aside program.	Sept. 2006
		1.b.3. Develop partnerships with housing coalitions and Public Housing Authorities (PHAs), and encourage use of	1.Each Continuum establishes formal partnership with at least one public housing authority and any housing coalition existing in its region.	1. Continuum leaders, Martha Kegel	Capital Area Alliance has partnership with housing coalition & OCD. UNITY has developed partnership with PHA which resulted	December 2005

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		local preferences for homeless people by PHAs.	2. A workshop on developing partnerships is held at 2005 state homeless conference.	2. Bonnie Moore	in 100 new Section 8 vouchers for homeless persons. To do: contact each Continuum.	
		1.b.4. Provide training to homeless service providers, housing developers and community partners to assist in the development of permanent housing for the homeless.	Training is provided that is accessible to every region.	UNITY, Capital Area Alliance, Hope for the Homeless	Training on Permanent Supportive Housing for chronic homeless held in New Orleans in Mar. 2004; training on developing affordable housing held in Baton Rouge in May 2004; Hope for the Homeless is planning state conference in Sept. 2005.	Ongoing
		1.b.5. Provide information and technical assistance to help ensure that all Continuums apply for and receive annual Permanent Housing Bonus and encourage its use to develop Supportive Housing for the chronically homeless.	All Continuums annually receive Permanent Housing Bonus and earmark some portion of it to the chronically homeless.	Policy Academy; HUD's Louisiana Office for TA	Lois Mayho and Martha Kegel sent out letter to Continuums in spring 2004; CoC funding for 2005 to be reviewed.	Ongoing
		1.b.6. Explore other possible avenues for funding for housing, including health, mental health, DSS, and veterans agency models.	State agencies are asked to determine whether any additional agency funds can be freed up for housing their clients who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.	Policy Academy (John Bellew, Jackie Drodgy)	Legislation needed to authorize TANF to be used for rental assistance to prevent homelessness.	Sept. 2006
		1.b.7. Identify laws and regulations that impede development of affordable housing.	Compile information on CoC applications.	Janice Roberts	Janice emailed Continuums.	Ongoing
2. EXPAND AND IMPROVE ACCESS TO MAINSTREAM SERVICES FOR CHRONICALLY HOMELESS	2.a. Partner with mainstream agencies to prevent and end chronic homelessness.	2.a.1. Expand Policy Academy to include a broader range of agencies, and develop a comprehensive list of mainstream partners to collaborate.	All relevant agencies invited to participate in Policy Academy.	Janice Roberts	Medicaid, OCDD, Veterans Affairs now represented on Policy Academy as a result of Janice Roberts' efforts.	March 2005
		2.a.2. Ask each agency to develop or update a policy on how to eliminate barriers to chronically homeless persons' access to agency services and to consider developing special programs targeted to assisting chronically homeless persons in ways that can help overcome homelessness.	All agencies will develop or update policies on eliminating barriers to access by chronic homeless persons. Special programs targeted to chronic homeless will be developed.	Martha Kegel, Bettina Buval, Eddie Barras, Jackie Drodgy	Ask James Gilmore to assist with this process. No Wrong Door concept has been pioneered by DSS.	June 2005
		2.a.3. Advocate that buildings which house mainstream services are accessible to persons without I.D.	Determine which buildings are inaccessible. Obtain agreement that persons without ID can access building in order to get mainstream services.	Policy Academy	Send letter to each agency asking them to determine whether their buildings are accessible and to take steps to overcome any inaccessibility.	December 2005

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		2.a.4. Participate in Health Care and Poverty Summits.	Strategies for ending chronic homelessness will be brought to the summits.	LACH, John Bellew	Continuums and LACH participated in summits, advocating for supportive housing, implementation of Housing First, and more \$ for Housing Trust Fund. John Bellew to report on post-Health Care summit developments.	Ongoing
		2.a.5. Educate continuums in accessing Social Security and Veterans benefits and the range of state government programs.	Continuums will be offered training and access to a Louisiana Mainstream Resources checklist available on ServicePoint. The Policy Academy will request that opportunities for state agencies to distribute information be provided at the annual state homelessness conferences.	UNITY	Training offered to all Continuums and provided in Regions I, IV, VIII and X. Regions I, VII, IX, and X obtained competitive SSA HOPE grants to speed receipt of benefits to CH persons. UNITY developed Louisiana Mainstream Resources Checklist.	Ongoing
		2.a.6.Explore outstationing of eligibility workers at homeless shelters and other places where homeless people congregate.	Meet with DSS and other agencies.	UNITY		Sept. 2005
		2.a.7. Work with Department of Labor and private employers and agencies to develop employment opportunities for the homeless and chronically homeless.	The availability of federal funds and the possibility of a pilot program will be explored with DOL.	Policy Academy		Sept. 2005
	2b. Expand funding for supportive services essential to Permanent Supportive Housing, and expand other services to end and prevent homelessness.	2.b.1. Explore Medicaid mental health rehab option as funding source for services. Review State Plan and advocate for changes.	Write letter explaining services needed and request that state seek waiver to structure the rehab option so that services in Supportive Housing can be offered.	John Bellew and Martha Kegel	Letter to be drafted	June 2005
		2.b.2. Explore other Medicaid funding options for supportive services for Supportive Housing.	1.Expand access to psychosocial rehab programs to persons exiting institutions and adjust reimbursement according to individual need. 2.Expand wrap-around services for persons with mental illness who aren't covered under Medicaid, including use of Interagency Coordination (ISC) Process. 3. Explore development of Medicaid waiver for adults with severe mental illness and	John Bellew and Martha Kegel		March 2006

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			children with serious emotional disturbance. 4. Provide additional Act 378 funds for supported living for people with mental illness.			
		2.b.3 Advocate for use of CDBG funds to fund supportive services linked to housing for the homeless.	Some CDBG funds are used to fund supportive services for the homeless.	Bonnie Moore and Martha Kegel	Bonnie attended hearing and submitted comments on Consolidated Plan.	Ongoing
		2.b.4. Advocate for congressional adoption of Ending Long-term Homelessness Services Initiative (ELHSI) creating funding stream in DHHS.	Louisiana delegation is asked to support ELHSI.	LACH	LACH met with staff of Mary Landrieu, David Vitter and William Jefferson in July 2004	Ongoing
3. FACILITATE AN EFFECTIVE CONTINUUM OF HOUSING AND SERVICES FOR CHRONICALLY HOMELESS PEOPLE THROUGH A STATEWIDE HOMELESS MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (HMIS).	3.a. Engage mainstream agencies in planning and implementation of a statewide HMIS.	3.a.1. Advocate for uniform federal definition of chronic homelessness, and agree on state definition, to define eligibility for services and housing. Inform state agencies of definition.	A federal agency-wide common uniform definition of chronic homelessness will be promulgated.	Janice Roberts	At Oct. 2004 Policy Academy meeting in Virginia, the Team Leader requested uniform definition.	December 2005
		3.a.2. Send letter to state agencies informing of state HMIS initiative, inviting to Roundtable, asking for collaboration. Inform of assistance needed, including technical support for data integration and compatibility.	Interested state agencies agree to collaborate on formulating policy, planning, and implementation of statewide HMIS.	LIACH/Janice Roberts, Continuums of Care		December 2005
	3.b. Develop strategy to integrate and coordinate information systems.	3.b.1. Develop clearinghouse for statistics.	Clearinghouse for data and statistics established.	LIACH/Janice Roberts	Compiling statewide data on Point in Time surveys.	Ongoing
		3.b.2. Use the integrated data systems to measure program performance and progress made to reduce general homelessness and chronic homelessness.	Outcomes are measured.	LIACH/Janice Roberts	To do: compile baseline performance outcomes statewide.	December 2007
4. PREVENT HOMELESSNESS THROUGH DISCHARGE	4.a. Promote improved discharge planning for all publicly funded	4.a.1. Convene summit for publicly funded systems to learn about federal guidelines seeking to prevent clients of publicly	1.Major publicly funded institutions will learn about federal guidelines and best practices and be asked to explore how they	LACH/Vicki Judice, Katherine Martin	Summit scheduled for 3/18/05 in BR. UNITY preparing manual for distribution. HOPE for the	March 2005

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PLANNING AND EARLY INTERVENTION.	hospitals, jails, prisons, foster care, mental health and substance abuse treatment facilities.	funded systems from being discharged to McKinney-Vento-funded programs and to learn about best practices in discharge planning.	can improve their own discharge planning policies to prevent homelessness.		Homeless also conducted a conference in summer 2004.	
		4.a.2. Seek improvements in discharge planning policies by publicly funded institutions.	1. Major publicly funded institutions each will make at least one major improvement in their discharge planning policies to prevent homelessness.	LACH/Vicki Judice, Katherine Martin	Post-summit follow up needed to secure changes in policies.	June 2005
		4.a..3. Seek to expand housing resources targeted to people being released from institutions, including Section 8, conventional public housing, veterans housing, hospital respite.	Housing units will be targeted to people being released from institutions, using resources other than Continuum of Care funds.	LACH/Vicki Judice, Katherine Martin		
		4.a.4. Ask publicly funded institutions to work with SSA and Medicaid prior to discharge of disabled clients to obtain or reactivate benefits upon discharge.	Publicly funded institutions will adopt policies to contact SSA and Medicaid prior to discharge of disabled clients.	LACH/Vicki Judice, Katherine Martin		September 2005
		4.a.5. Work to reduce incarceration of mentally ill and homeless persons by encouraging development of Mental Health Courts, Homeless Courts, supervised release programs, and better coordination between jails/prisons and mental health system.	Innovative programs will be developed, and their impact on reduction of recidivism and reduction of homelessness will be studied.	John Bellew	John Bellew/OMH hosted conference in April 2004; Orleans Parish Criminal District Court began Mental Health Court. UNITY is exploring creation of supervised release program for homeless persons in Orleans Municipal Court.	June 2007
	4.b. Develop and maintain Housing Resource lists of affordable housing for each region, with information shared by public and private agencies to prevent and end homelessness.	4.b.1. Identify which agencies currently maintain list of housing resources. 4.b.2. Identify what agency will develop and maintain a current master list and whether additional funding needs to be secured to support this activity.	Up-to-date lists of available affordable housing will be maintained for each region to assist agencies in placing clients in housing upon discharge.	LIACH/UNITY	UNITY will pilot project in Orleans and Jefferson Parish.	June 2006
	4.c. Design and develop multi-agency homeless profile/checklist to flag consumers at risk of	4.c.1. Review DOL & other agency assessment tools on at-risk consumers for use as models. 4.c.2. Determine best practices from other states for preventing state agency clients	Agencies will identify clients at risk for homelessness and develop protocol for securing resources to prevent their homelessness.	Policy Academy (Bettina Buval, Martha Kegel)		March 2006

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	homelessness and provide them resources to prevent homelessness.	from becoming homeless.				
	4.d. Develop more emergency financial assistance for short-term payment of rent, utilities and other expenses to prevent families and individuals from entering homeless shelter system.	4.d.1. Identify state, federal and private funds which could be made available for such assistance, including ESG, HOME, TANF, and Continuum of Care funds.	Emergency financial assistance funds to prevent homelessness will increase by 10 percent.	Policy Academy (Martha Kegel, Janice Roberts)		September 2006
	4.e. Assist homeless and those at risk of homelessness to obtain Earned Income Tax Credit.	4.e.1. Ensure that Continuum agencies have access to information about EITC and assistance available from IRS and other agencies.	Homeless persons will access EITC.	Continuums		December 2005